



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING
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Procedures for Testifying at a Public Planning Board Meeting or Hearing

(Rules of Procedures 1.106, 1.107, 1.108 & 1.109)

1. Do I have to sign up to testify at a board meeting? **Yes!**

- **On the date of the meeting:** A sign in sheet will be located at the back of the meeting room beginning 30 minutes before the meeting is scheduled to begin.
- **Order of speakers:** Speakers will be called to the podium in the order in which they signed in or as set by the Chairperson pursuant to the board's rules of procedure. After the list is exhausted, the Chair will typically ask if anyone else that was not signed up would like to speak.

2. How much time will I be given to present testimony?

- **Individuals** may speak for up to **3 minutes**.
- **Group spokesperson** may speak up to **5 minutes**. The board encourages large groups to designate a spokesperson to allow for a thorough and cohesive presentation of the group's position on the issue while avoiding repetitious testimony. The group's unity and support can be recognized at the end of the spokesperson's testimony by having the group stand. The spokesperson may also submit the written testimony and/or a petition of support/opposition from the individual members of the group.
- Only **one** member of a recognized group may testify as the group spokesperson to be granted 5 minutes. All other individuals from the group who wish to testify may do so as "individuals" for a maximum of 3 minutes.
- **NOTE: Time may not be ceded by a spokesperson or individual to another speaker.**

3. What must be included in my testimony?

- Oral testimony must begin with your name and address and whether you are pro or con.
- Written testimony must include the case name or number, your name, and address.

4. Can I submit written testimony to the board and if so, how and when?

- **Prior to and/or during the meeting: Yes!** The board encourages anyone who cannot attend the meeting to submit their written testimony at least 24 hours before the meeting. Your testimony will be considered as if you testified in person. You may also submit your written testimony at the meeting and are asked to provide 7 copies for distribution to the board and staff. Written testimony can also be sent to the board's e-mail planningboard@howardcountymd.gov or to DPZ at 3430 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, MD 21043.

5. Can written testimony be submitted after the meeting?

- **If the case is continued to another date: Yes!** If the meeting is continued to another date, the Board will continue to accept written public testimony. Only those who signed up at the original meeting and did not get an opportunity to speak will be allowed to provide oral testimony at the continued date.
- **After the meeting: No.** Additional written testimony will not be considered or accepted after the record has been closed. Written testimony will only be accepted after the meeting if the Chairperson announces at the end of the meeting that the record will be left open to receive additional written testimony for a specific time period.
- **During a work-session: No.** All board work-sessions are open to the public to observe the board's discussions. No additional testimony or information will be accepted at a board work-session.

Procedures for Testifying at a Public Planning Board Quasi-Judicial Hearing*

(Rules of Procedures 1.105)

1. Do I have to sign up to testify at a board meeting? Yes!

- Same as number 1 above

2. How much time will I be given to present testimony? Citizen testimony is untimed.

3. What must be included in my testimony?

- Oral testimony must begin with your name and address and whether you are pro or con.

4. Can I submit written testimony to the board and if so, how and when?

- **Prior to/after the hearing: No!** No testimony can be accepted outside of the Quasi-Judicial Hearing.
- **During the hearing: Yes!** You may submit written testimony with your oral testimony at the hearing and are asked to provide 8 copies for distribution to the board and staff.